

## House Republican Press Release

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### House Passes Winkler, Ryan Legislation To Protect Contact Lens Wearers



The House of Representatives today unanimously approved legislation introduced by State Rep. Lenny Winkler, R-Groton, and State Rep. Kevin Ryan, D-Montville, designed to protect people wearing contact lenses in Connecticut. House Bill 6302, An Act Restricting The Sale Of Cosmetic Contact Lenses, now goes to the State Senate for consideration.

Under the bill, nonprescription contact lenses with colors or patterns may be sold at retail only under the supervision of a licensed optician and in a registered optical establishment, office, or store. It does not restrict the ability of licensed physicians trained and specializing in eye diseases or licensed optometrists, from dispensing contact lenses.

Violation of the legislation would qualify as unfair trade practice under the Connecticut Unfair Trade Practice Act (CUTPA). This law prohibits businesses from engaging in unfair and deceptive acts or practices. It also allows individuals to sue. Courts may award actual and punitive damages, costs, reasonable attorneys fees and impose civil penalties of up to \$5,000 for willful violations.

“I’m pleased the Legislature is moving forward with this bill,” said Rep. Winkler. “Improperly fitted or worn contact lenses can cause corneal abrasions, ulcers of the eye and Iritis, which if untreated, can lead to blindness. This legislation will help ensure that only qualified professionals are permitted to dispense cosmetic contact lenses.”